

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Interest Grows In History of California

A group of Monterey Peninsula residents motored to San Francisco last week to attend the Western Museum conference and to absorb a bit of history, science, art and related subjects as presented by experts in their respective fields.

The meeting opened at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park with the director and members of the staff as the hosts for the program and luncheon. Instructive talks were made by Dr. Grace I. McCann Morley, director of the San Francisco Museum of Art on "Professional Challenges Today." F.F. Latta, retiring president of the Council of Western Museums, and director of the Kern County Museum at Bakersfield, told of the extensive program being carried on there; and John Ripley Forbes spoke of the activities of the Junior Museum in Sacramento, a project of the Wm. T. Hornaday Memorial Foundation.

The Academy of Science is the oldest organization of its kind in the west, having been in existence since 1853. During the day on Friday, the members of the Western Museum Conference were divided into groups and taken on conducted tours through the entire new addition to the building, which houses the planetarium (not yet ready for use), a new wing for the African exhibit of large animals, a huge room with exhibits relating to time (clocks, watches and other varied means of telling time); and a beautiful new auditorium where the meetings were held.

A tour of the storage rooms for the carcasses and skins of large and small animals and birds, of the work rooms where the mounting is done and the backgrounds painted, an inspection of the making of the telescopes, the grinding of the lenses, etc., for the planetarium. These lenses will be the first made in this country and will be equal, if not better, than those formerly made in Germany.

Following a Chinese dinner in Chinatown, a "Kinescope of Television Show" was presented by Dr. Robert C. Miller, the director of the California Academy of Science, with the actors and narrator present to take a bow. This television series known as "Science in Action" is presented by the academy each Tuesday evening.

G.C. Carl, the director of the Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C. and Mrs. Carl, had flown from their far north home for the conference and presented a moving picture of the bird life on the small islands near Victoria.

On Saturday morning the California Palace of the Legion of Honor was the setting for the meeting. There were instructive talks by John Humphrey and Clifford Peterson of the Museum of Art on "Art and Man", Stanley Shirk, director of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; Anneliese Hoyer of the San Francisco Museum of Art, and by M. Kolber of the San Mateo Junior College, on the use of plastics in the preservation of study materials such as fish and plant life.

The Palace of the Legion of Honor and the San Francisco Museum of Art were hosts at luncheon in the latter's gallery. Among the hostesses there was Mrs. Henry Potter Russell of Carmel Valley and San Francisco, who is a director of the museum board.

There were 114 persons registered at the conference, with 40 separate organizations represented. Dr. Hildebard Howard of the Los Angeles Museum, was elected president of the group for the coming year. Dorr G. Yeaker is the vice president; Dr. A.S. Coggershall, director of the Santa Barbara Museum, is the secretary. The Los Angeles Museum will be the host for the 1952 meeting of the group.

Miss Pearl Chase of Santa Barbara addressed the assembly on three important subjects, naming the need for a qualified historian in the State Division of Beaches, and Parks, the value of a trained park naturalist and the needs of the American Indian.

At the conclusion of her talk a resolution was passed to be forwarded to the governor of the state asking that the Department of Finance reconsider the denial to the State Division of Beaches and Parks of a professional historian to assist in the restoration, preservation and administration of the 23 historical monuments in the State of California. The Council of Western Museums felt that there is a growing interest in California history and at present there is no professional historian to guide the work of the historical museums which potentially can be the most outstanding examples of preservation of historic landmarks.